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SERIES

APRIL

VOL.  
40

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round  
a  
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

PART 221.

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ELEVENPENCE.

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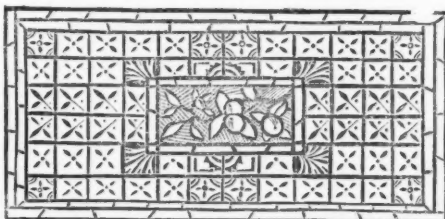
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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 957. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

## GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"  
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

### BOOK III.

#### CHAPTER I. "MY LADY DISDAIN."

MEDEHURST ABBEY was a noble and beautiful place—the place of note in the county—and Sir Roy Kenyon, its present owner, was a universal favourite. He was a man of handsome presence and courtly manners, with nothing too great or too distinguished about him to dwarf lesser natures or make ordinary folk uncomfortable. Somewhat epicurean and easy-going in tastes and morals, he liked to take life as he found it, and get as much enjoyment as was compatible with a minimum of trouble. He had no special political principles; he went to church as a concession to respectability, not that he valued its creeds or doctrines, or, for the matter of that, believed in them. He had an unlimited adoration for his only daughter, whose will had been his law from the first moment she had acquired the power of asserting it, and recognised the advantages of so doing.

This daughter, Alexis, was somewhat unpopular among the maids and matrons who openly adored the eligible widower. Those clear, glowing eyes of hers had a knack of making other women feel uncomfortable, or "found out;" and her beauty was in every way so remarkable that they had to acknowledge themselves extinguished whenever she appeared.

To say Alexis Kenyon was "original" was to say very little, and yet she was too unlike all other women to be classified as they would be. Her mother had been a Russian—a beautiful widow—whom Sir Roy had met in his wanderings, and

married in a fit of idolatrous passion, from which he was destined to awake very speedily. He brought her to his English home, which she never liked, and introduced her to his English neighbours and friends, whom she cordially detested, and with whom she made herself extremely unpopular. The marriage was not a happy one, and Sir Roy's constant absences seemed to give grounds for what rumour had already whispered, that he tried to console himself abroad for the absence of the love and peace he assuredly never found at home. His wife had but this one child, to whom he was devotedly attached, and when at last freedom came, she was his constant companion. He took her everywhere. He had her educated in all places and by all sorts of teachers. The result of this system was that she grew up most decidedly "unfeminine," according to the ordinary acceptance of the term. She had a singularly acute and cultivated intellect; was a fearless rider, an indefatigable traveller; could swim, boat, fish, and play billiards as well as any man; and withal had a most delicate and graceful beauty that conveyed the idea of indolence and languor rather than dauntless courage, and almost perfect health.

She could be "grande dame" to her finger-tips when so disposed, and again throw off listlessness and languor in a moment to become eager, fierce, impulsive, wilful, as the fancy of the hour decreed.

She had had lovers innumerable, but they bored more than they diverted her. At three-and-twenty she was heart-whole as a child, and, like a child, regardless of the sufferings caused by her caprices, or the follies committed for her sake. She had travelled a great deal, but though she professed to no weakness of regard for one country or one place more than



another, she had a decided preference for her beautiful English home, and would often be seized with a whim to return to it, just as Sir Roy fancied he was irretrievably committed to a lengthened sojourn in some foreign land.

A whim of this description had brought them back to Medehurst towards the end of June, when everyone imagined they were in America.

She had been crazy to go to America, and had travelled indefatigably through its wonderful cities and magnificent country; but suddenly she discovered that the people were odious, the climate intolerable, the habits and customs vulgar in the extreme, and declared she must go home: it had been idiotcy to come all this distance. Then there was nothing interesting or entertaining to be found; and Sir Roy, listening with his usual good-humoured indulgence, gave the order to return, and, much to his own surprise, found that for once his daughter's inclinations tallied exactly with his own.

They found London hot and crowded, and Alexis thereupon carried her father off to the Abbey, foregoing all the charms and allurements of the season by reason of a sudden caprice for the country. The caprice had lasted for several days. Towards sunset on one of these days she was sauntering, with a troop of dogs at her heels, through the woods that were the glory of the Abbey. Away to the right lay the ruins of the old cloisters, covered thick and close with ivy, where the owls and bats found resting-place. On the other side of the wood was the beautiful beech avenue that led from the lodge to the house, and the girl, as she skirted it, suddenly paused and looked with surprise at a figure advancing rapidly in her direction.

In a moment she had left the shade of the wood, and stood in full sight as the man advanced—a young man, fair and sun-tanned; with a tall, soldierly figure and bearing, that brought a smile of recognition to her lips.

She went towards him with something of surprise as well as of pleasure in her face:

"Neale!" she exclaimed, "what a surprise! Why did you not send word you were coming?"

The young man took her outstretched hand. He did not meet the frank gaze with equal frankness, and a momentary flush crossed his brow and cheek.

"I know," he said, "that you like sur-

prises, and I thought you'd be here as—*as town is so hot.*"

"It was detestable," she admitted. "I was glad to leave it. But how well you look! And your eyes——"

"Yes! they are all right. That German oculist is wonderful."

"You have been a long time away," she said pleasantly, and looking at him in a calm, critical fashion that somewhat discomposed him. "Were you at Vienna all the time?"

"No. I took advantage of my leave and went on to Rome. There was no use coming back. You and Sir Roy were at the Antipodes, as usual——"

"No, not quite so far, only in America. But shall we go on to the house?"

"If you wish. Is your father in? Have you any visitors?"

"Not at present. I believe some people are coming next week—no one you know; and, to answer your first question last, my father is in. I left him in the library going over the steward's accounts."

They turned and moved slowly up the avenue, under the shade of the beautiful leafage.

"You have not said you are glad to see me," remarked the young man presently, as he glanced down at the pale, clear-cut face by his side.

"I am never glad to see anyone—except my father," she answered tranquilly; "and I never tell polite fibs for the sake of politeness. No one can say I am not sincere."

"Sincerity," said her cousin, "is not always agreeable."

"Oh, that is the fault of people who can't bear a little plain speaking."

"Your speaking," he said, laughing, "is generally plain enough. You don't leave a loophole for imagination. How much mischief have you done in these past months?"

"What do you call mischief?" she said. "That is rather your province as a man, when your hands are idle and your days unemployed."

He flushed hotly.

"If it is a man's province, it is a woman's faculty," he said.

"Well, we try to resist; you don't. There's the difference. Why, you look quite guilty. Is it a case of the 'arrow shot at a venture'?"

"Tormenting, as usual," he said, with lightness; but it was forced lightness, and her keen ear detected the false ring in his tones.

"I think," she said gravely, "you must allow I have always been merciful to you. I have looked upon you as a sort of elder brother all my life. Come, be frank. Have you met with any adventures since we last met? Your letters were always most unsatisfactory."

"I was never a good hand at writing," he said, with an effort to appear composed, as he met the merciless raillery of her clear, laughing eyes.

"No; a very stupid hand; but that is begging the question. You know I dislike evasions. I shall really begin to think you have something to conceal."

"You would be wrong then," he said hotly, almost angrily. "But my concerns have never appeared to interest you before, and I fail to see why they should do so now."

"Do you?" she said with a little cold laugh. "It is somewhat inexplicable. Men are like children—they are easily spoilt. Once listen to a child, and he will bore you about himself for ever. Appear interested in a man, and there will be no end to his claims on your patience and forbearance. It is best to nip both in the first bud of attempted confidence."

"I thought you were asking for mine."

"Because you appeared unwilling to give it. Had you been as ready as of yore I should probably never have listened to a word."

"Merciless as ever," said the young man, looking down at the listless, ironical face with as near an approach to dislike as he dared to betray.

He disliked clever women, sharp women, satirical women. Alexis was a wonderful combination of all three. Her manifold contradictions had always puzzled him. Her beauty had never allured, nor her fascination attracted. He had been familiar with them and their effects so long. He had felt a good-humoured contempt for the men who had adored her so madly, and been capable of so many follies for her sake. The merciless raillery; the almost contemptuous coldness; the irony of words and manner; the unfathomable depths of her nature; these were all things well known and, to him, without charm. At present she irritated him in an exceptional degree. Her keen, searching eyes seemed to read his heart; her light laugh stung him to anger. He had almost forgotten her existence; now it reminded him of duty, obligations, sacrifices—all things he most disliked and least desired to have recalled.

"My time," he said, with an effort at unconcern, "has been spent somewhat idly and unprofitably. You cannot wonder at that when you know—"

"That it is nearly three months since your sight was restored, and from that time you appear to have lost all interest in home and friends—to say nothing of relations."

"What folly!" he said impatiently. "I have been knocking about—seeing all sorts of places, that's all. I told you I went to Venice and Rome, and—and all those places sight-seeing. I can't expect you to show any interest in my opinion of them. You know them all by heart."

"Yes," she said quietly; "I think I do. On the whole you have shown consideration in not inflicting me with tourists' rhapsodies. Did you meet any of our mutual friends in the Winter Cities?"

"No."

"The Grahams, I know, were in Venice," she said, glancing at his abstracted face. "I thought you might have run across them."

"And you?" he asked abruptly. "How did you like America? What do you think of it?"

"I thought it very—large," she said gravely. "The people were much the same as the people one meets 'doing' Europe. They always asked an infinitude of questions; they always wanted to know one's family history, and one's family's family history five minutes after an introduction. They were extremely desirous to be communicative, which always bored me; and they were tiresomely good-natured, which always put me in a bad temper."

"I wonder," remarked her cousin, "if you have ever had a good word to say of any place or person that you have seen?"

"Not often," she said laughing. "The places are generally so overpraised beforehand, that they affect me with instantaneous disappointment. The people are horribly uninteresting."

"What would you call 'interesting'?" he asked moodily. "Some melodramatic hero who had committed a murder—or some washed-out genius with a spite against mankind in general."

"Not at all," she said coolly. "I have met both classes, and I assure you they did not interest me in the very least."

"Met a murderer—you?" he scoffed incredulously.

"Yes," she answered with composure.

"He had not absolutely shot or stabbed his victim, but he did as bad—he broke her heart; and she—she killed herself in despair. No one seemed to mind. Society petted him as much as ever. True—he was an Earl's eldest son."

Again that hot flush crept up to the young man's brow.

"Don't talk of such horrors," he said impatiently. "I wish you were more like other girls."

"Thank you for the wish; I don't echo it. Humanity is cut out too much on the same pattern for me not to be grateful that Nature varied it a little in my case."

She looked up at the blue sky with serene indifference. She knew she had ruffled his temper, and that pleased her, and made it easier to keep her own.

"I wonder you came back," she said at last.

He started a little. His thoughts had been travelling far away.

"My uncle wished it," he said.

"Oh! you should not mind papa. I never do."

"That is a dutiful remark, and essentially one of your speeches," said her cousin. "But everyone has not your privileges. I have always obeyed Sir Roy's wishes."

"Yes," she said. "You have. Sometimes I wonder why?"

"Perhaps because I was taught obedience as a duty; perhaps because one so good and generous deserves a little consideration; perhaps——"

"I wouldn't say any more," she interpolated, with her little slighting laugh. "Unless you add—perhaps because he is not your father, as he has the misfortune to be mine."

"Alexis," said the young man, "you have certainly been spoilt by over-indulgence. You have never known a care, or a sorrow——"

"That," she interpolated, "may be because I never cared for anyone sufficiently to suffer on their account. You have always told me I am pre-eminently selfish."

"You convey it, I must say. Is it the fault of your temperament, your education, or your nature? I often wonder."

"I am obliged to you for taking the trouble to conjecture anything about me," she said coldly. "But to save you any more cogitation on the subject, I will tell you that it is only the fault of—myself. I believe I was born without a heart. I never suffered from emotion in any shape or form. I am tolerably happy. I have

everything I wish for, and I enjoy life as much as I care to enjoy it."

"And yet I never heard you say you were pleased at anything, or by anything, for any length of time."

"That is only because things in general are so very unsatisfactory, and I am too restless not to like change and variety. I like people and places very well for a week. After that I seem to know everything about them. It is their own fault. I prefer anything to monotony."

"I don't envy you your disposition," he said. "Of course you are a very clever person, and all that; but your reading and your studying of character, and your habit of analysing every emotion, and ridiculing anything like deep feeling, have only succeeded in making you cold and cynical, and unlike any other woman. I would rather have my own stupid brains, than your clever ones."

"Like the man with the deformed child, who said at least it was his own. Well, you have the sublime essence of life—content. It is only a few ridiculous people here and there who want to see into the depths of things, and fall out with them because they are only—shallows; only a few dissatisfied souls who cry out against the trumpery, and folly, and wickedness which make up the sum of life. No doubt you are happy, and I am—not. But then I am supremely selfish."

"You make yourself out worse than you are," he said magnanimously. "If you ever fall in love, that will wake the womanhood in your nature."

Her slight, scornful laugh fell across the warm spring air like a chime of bells.

"Thanks for the suggestion. I am not of the Chloe and Phyllis type of feminine nature. I never had and never shall have an atom of sentiment in me."

"Oh," he said good-humouredly, "that is all very fine as yet. Your time will come, as everyone else's has come, or will. You won't laugh, and jest, and sneer at everything then."

"You speak so confidently that I may conclude your 'time' is one of those fortunate experiences," she said, scoffingly. "Allow me to congratulate you. I thought your travels had not been wasted; but, as far as I am concerned, leave my fate out of the question, if you please. Why, how embarrassed you look! Wrong—of course I am wrong. No man ever yet confessed he had been guilty of such folly, unless he was compelled by circumstances. Sometimes

the circumstance is a prospective mother-in-law; sometimes 'les convenances.' Which case is yours? Not the mother-in-law, I hope. She would be sure to be a dreadful foreign person, and as for the fiancée——"

"Alexis, for Heaven's sake hold your tongue."

He spoke so furiously and with such white heat of anger in his face, that the girl involuntarily obeyed him.

"Oh!" she said, coolly; "have I offended you? A thousand pardons. I thought you better-tempered than to fly into a passion at a jest. But, see, there is papa on the lawn. We will say nothing more about the 'circumstance' at present."

### SHADOWS.

THE youngest member of our family, a little maid of five years, who is banished to bed at what she considers an absurdly early hour, always demands that a light shall be left in her bed-room. That no "grown-up" confirmation may, even inferentially, be given to the fears which fill her little breast, her desire is granted without question or remark. No allusion is ever made in her hearing to any imaginative terrors that may exist in darkness, so that she will grow up like the other children, perfectly indifferent as to being left with or without a light. A thoughtful senior can, however, perfectly sympathise with her feelings as she leaves the family group in the warm, bright room, to make the long journey upstairs; herself, the nurse, and the handrails casting grotesque shadows by the way. Then to be left alone; those two strong towers of comfort and refuge, father and mother, too far away to arrive in time should any of those vague beings which she fancies near come to harm or even—sufficiently dreadful thought—look upon her!

Yes, truly, she is frightened at shadows; but in this how like to many potent, grave, and reverend "seniors" of ten times her age? Did not the brave and ruthless Richard the Third say, after his visions in the tent on Bosworth Field?—

By the Apostle Paul, shadows to-night  
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,  
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers,  
Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.

How many of what are called the stern realities of life are, rightly counted, but mere shadows, trifles light as air!

What seems more solid than the wealth of a millionaire? And yet what was it to the great French banker, the owner of many millions, who would sit at the head of his table, lost in thought, and munching a piece of dry bread, while his guests feasted around him; who would drive to his office in the morning, and there work harder and longer than the poorest of his clerks, overpowered with endless worry and anxiety, working like a slave every day of his life, and finally falling dead in harness like an overworked cab-horse? What was his wealth but a shadow?

Does not many a man throw away the substance he possesses in grasping at the shadow of other people's money, to be won by a lucky stroke on the Exchange or the Turf? Does not many a bright youth cast away the solid substance of health and strength in the pursuit of the shadow of pleasure; and, in the mad folly of "seeing life," find himself suddenly face to face with the grim shadow, Death? Have we not often seen how a man will creep with unwearying patience through the many narrow, winding ways of fraud, cunning, and treachery, only to find, as he grasps the much coveted reward, that he clutches at a shadow; and that, like the wizard's money in the tales of the "Arabian Nights," the precious coins of gold and silver prove to be dead leaves and withered rubbish?

There are many kinds of shadows about us, some bringing comfort, others misery; some appealing strongly to our senses, others of which we are quite unconscious. Note that man walking through the crowded streets of the city. Well dressed, rich, respected, he walks with his head up, smiling as he thinks cheerfully of the success of all his plans. There is no hitch anywhere; the wheels of his scheme work smoothly and easily, and he walks along building splendid castles in the air as he traces his future progress from one success to another. But he has a shadow he knows not of. A few yards behind him follows one, in no way distinguishable from the crowd around, noting his every movement, his words, his friends, acquaintances, and favourite haunts. That is his shadow, and a fatal one. He may have more than one such shadow—silent, unobtrusive, vigilant—and ever round and about these lurk, more intangible still, the shadows of exposure, disgrace, punishment, and ruin.

Some men are shadows of others in a very different way. Here is FitzRufus, a



young but rising man in a large public office. His great hope and aim are of some day succeeding his chief, McSenex, and he is fast becoming his shadow. He imitates his walk and his gestures; he adopts his expressions; he has arranged his official room in the same manner; and leans back in his official chair in the same impressive, official way. McSenex, at times, walks with his two hands in the small of his back, grasping his stick, which dangles behind him; and FitzRufus now does the same. McSenex tosses a document to a subordinate as he would throw a penny to beggar. FitzRufus has already acquired the same lofty style. Fitz is a shadow; but he has also his satellites, who are proud to shadow him.

Here is little Johnny Dangle, who is always on the look-out for people whom he thinks it worth while to know or be seen with. Does he see a man gradually working his way upward and emerging from the ordinary crowd, Johnny at once fastens upon him, and it would take an unusual number of slights to shake him off. Johnny, too, has a pleasant way with him, and will do his utmost to be accepted as an admiring friend. Having secured this advantage, he gets known to his new friend's acquaintances, and so mounts upwards with his friendships, gradually dropping his connection with the lower rounds of his ladder as he finds them no longer necessary. Such a shadow as this will grow into an important substance in time and have shadows of his own.

Perhaps the most ridiculous shadow is our poor friend, Tom Snipe. A clerk with an income of about a hundred and fifty pounds a year, he prides himself on his aristocratic appearance, and imagines that his feeble imitations of the Pall Mall saunterer deceive the general public; the sneers and jokes of his fellow clerks he, of course, looks upon as vulgar jealousy.

As we wander through London streets we see on scores of faces the shadows of past lives. Here they come, an endless living stream, face after face, young and old, rich and poor, grave and gay; and how many do we see without their shadows of past crimes or weaknesses, past griefs and troubles, self-indulgence or self-denial, hope or fear, victory or defeat! So we may watch them as they in tens, in hundreds, and in thousands, "come like shadows, so depart."

Shakespeare reminds us of this fact of a

man's sins and sorrows writing themselves upon his face as in a book, when he makes Richard the Second, after his deposition, ask for a mirror that he may see

The very book indeed  
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

After dashing the mirror to the ground, he bids Bolingbroke to note

How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.

And to the remark,

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed  
The shadow of your face.

he replies:

These external manners of laments  
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief  
That swells with silence in the tortured soul;  
There lies the substance.

When one contemplates the fierce struggles and deadly wounds of the battle of life, the unreal nature of the rewards and prizes men fight for, the extraordinary apportionment of success or failure, the elevation of the foolish, the degradation of the wise, the good fortune of the bad man, the misfortune of the worthy one, we are often led to wonder whether we and our lives are aught but shadows of some greater world and greater life with which we may be some day acquainted.

It seems as though these were the living men,  
And we the coloured shadows on the wall.

There are certain shadows which accompany every man through life, shadows of acts, foolish or perhaps criminal, that he may have committed in his youth. Many a one has, by some foolish falsehood, or a first step from the paths of strict honesty, been compelled to cover his first fault by a second, and that by a third, till he finds the one first misdoing has produced a shadow to darken his whole career. Many a road to success at various times opens itself to him, which his abilities and energy may be fully equal to following; but across it there falls that shadow of his past folly, sin, or crime, that makes it either useless or impossible for him to seize the opportunity. He must be content to make his journey in the by-ways of life unnoted and unknown. Perhaps an ill-judged marriage, such as the poet Churchill made in his boyhood, may be the shadow on his life.

Thackeray has made this fate fall upon his Warrington, in "Pendennis." A mistaken marriage on the part of Edward the Fourth led to his quarrel with the King-maker, Warwick, his temporary de-



position, some sanguinary battles, and eventually to the death of Elizabeth Woodville's relatives upon the scaffold. Fearful shadows, these, of one foolish act. Hundreds of cases might be quoted to show that many of the misfortunes of our lives spring from our own mistaken actions. As old Fletcher so aptly puts it,

Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

Some shadows, however, there are that give pleasure. Who has not stood upon some elevated spot on a bright summer's day and noted shadows of the fleecy clouds floating swiftly across the bright green meadows and the golden fields of corn; or watched with pleasure the same shadows giving a deep blue tinge to the bright sparkling green of the sunlit ocean? What is a photograph but a shadow, and to how many a lover has the sun-picture of his lass brought consolation for absence? On the lonely sheep-run, under canvas by the gully, where the gold-seekers work; on fields of war or noble vessel's deck, to many a manly heart has such a shadow been a sweet reminder of happy days past and to come, or a gentle pleading to resist temptation and avoid wrong-doing? How many a poor old mother or anxious father has looked with pride and pleasure on the shadow of their gallant boy doing his duty or fighting for fortune thousands of miles away o'er land and sea? And should he fall by spear or bullet, should he sink under some deadly swamp fever, or be swallowed by the angry wave, how highly prized a treasure is that portrait shadow, perhaps the only one left, and valued accordingly, "far above rubies," more precious than refined gold!

Perhaps the most familiar of all are the shadows on the wall. They have been the amusement of the young, probably, for all time; we remember what subject of fun and amusement they were for our own childhood, and we can listen to the little ones of the present as they prattle and laugh about them now. It is only with a feeling of pain that we can look upon them as a consolation of poverty, for the home must be dreary and wretched indeed to which we can apply the words of gentle Tom Hood's sempstress, who, describing her room, speaks of

A wall so blank, my shadow I thank  
For sometimes falling there.

Who cannot call to mind how many a

time and oft, when twilight has come upon us, and the family have grouped themselves round the fire—some talking, some silent, some whispering, others musing, the shadows have seemed to cluster together and watch us? Sometimes tales are started, and can there be any more fitting time, or more appropriate setting for a ghost story?—the bright, red glow of the fire in front, and the dim, mysterious half-darkness behind, with the distorted shadows on the walls and ceiling. Longfellow speaks in one of his poems of that hour

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,  
And like phantoms on the wall,  
Shadows from the fitful fire-light  
Dance upon the parlour wall.

There is a certain kind of shadow portrait; a profile cut out in black paper and pasted on a white ground, examples of which may still be seen in humble homes. Occasionally one may even now come upon a professor of this art of portraiture in the streets of London. These shadows, known as *Silhouettes*, are historical. They derive their name from a French Minister of State, who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, had no more popular remedy against the imminent bankruptcy of the nation than honest, stern economy and reform. The wits of the day ridiculed him by adopting all kinds of ludicrous fashions of economy. They wore coats of the most miserly dimensions, sometimes without sleeves; they abandoned the use of gold snuff-boxes, and replaced them by rough wooden ones. Instead of splendid oil paintings, they had portraits produced by tracing with a pencil the profile of their shadows cast by a candle on white paper. These portraits they named after the minister, *Silhouettes*. But the lurid light of these days cast a fearful shadow on the next generation. These were the evil times of Louis the Fifteenth, and of the hideous shadows thrown by this reign upon the next, perhaps the most prominent was the guillotine. The decent, well-meaning Louis the Sixteenth suffered for the vices of his predecessor, and all Europe fell under the shadow of war and its consequent miseries. The French Tree of Liberty, so freely moistened and nourished with blood, developed into Napoleon, whose shadow rests upon the land to this day.

The fearful shadow of the Revolution was even then apparent to more than one of the philosophers of the time. Bishop Butler, Leibnitz, and Gilbert, predicted it in clear and unmistakeable terms. Rous-

seau distinctly foretold it, and advised the aristocracy to prepare for it, by having their children taught trades. He foresaw the horrors that would ensue from what he spoke of as "inevitable revolutions, when the great should become little, the rich poor, the monarch a subject."

Yet this is not the only historical event to which we may apply the poet Campbell's line—

Coming events cast their shadows before.

The revolt of the American colonies was predicted in 1754 by Lord Orford and many others. The author of "Piers Plowman," in the reign of Edward the Third, foretold the fall of the religious houses; and, twenty years before its fulfilment, Erasmus made the same prediction. Sir Thomas More also spoke to his nephew of his fear that they might soon see the day, when they would be glad to make a league and composition with heretics for mutual toleration. The poet George Withers, who lived through the stormy period of the Commonwealth, and took an active part in the military operations, seems to have been impressed with the idea of future events being foreshadowed, judging by his lines—

It may be on that darkness, which they find  
Within their hearts, a sudden light hath shin'd,  
Making reflections of some things to come.

Whether foreseen or not, shadows do fall on men and nations; both alike, after, perhaps basking in the sunshine of prosperity, suffer eclipse, or have to face the darkness of decline and extinction. Where are those wondrous cities of the plain of the Euphrates and Tigris, that existed thousands of years before Nineveh or Babylon, and yet are entirely unknown to history, the facts of their being, and of their advanced state of civilisation only coming to light, even now, by the reading of tiles and cylinders of clay which had been hidden in mounds of rubbish hundreds of centuries?

How many other nations, now entirely unknown, have risen to a high pitch of power and glory, to decline and fall, and become less than shadows! As with them, so with us. Our lives are made up by chequered light and shade: happy they who have most of the former. One thing certain is that every man, no matter how favoured of fortune he may be, must at last face the dread journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What light, what life, what realities, what shadows he may meet beyond, no man knoweth.

## PETROLEUM.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, unquestionably the greatest and most wonderful novelty is petroleum. The word "novelty" is hardly adequate for what might be familiarly called the biggest thing on record, the opening out of a new source of light and heat, which can yet be hardly called a discovery or invention—for oil wells have been known and utilised from the earliest ages; utilised, that is, in a local and limited way. The most recent of the great sources of supply, opened out on the shores of the Caspian, is that whose existence has been the longest on record. The fire-temple of Baku, where burns the eternal flame which, tradition says, has lasted from untold ages, is supplied by a natural oil well, and we have the testimony of Messer Marco Polo to the existence of an early oil trade in the same locality. He writes of "a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred ship-loads might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food"—perhaps Marco tried it, and we can imagine the face he made over the experiment. And, with all the resources of modern chemistry, petroleum has not yet been made palatable. But, if not adapted for salads, 'tis good to burn, and is also used to anoint camels that have had the mange." We have just rediscovered the value of petroleum as an unguent; but wandering Tartars knew all about it centuries ago.

As a medicinal oil it was that American petroleum first became known to us, when it had some little repute as a liniment for rheumatic pains. The early French missionaries had met with the oil among the Indians, who called it *Atorontou*, a name that ought to have made its fortune as a patent medicine, had the uses of advertisements then been fully understood. Oil wells, indeed, had been fully noticed and discussed in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky—but nobody thought there was money in them. In sinking wells for brine in those regions, sometimes people would strike oil, and think themselves unlucky in coming across a liquid that was of no use for pickling hogs.

The first impulse towards raising oil came, curiously enough, from England, where oil wells are scarce. They are not altogether unknown, however; and one was discovered at Riddings, in Derbyshire, in a

coal and ironstone region, which attracted the attention of a practical chemist, Mr. James Young, of Glasgow, who succeeded in extracting a marketable oil from the natural product. And, as "Young's Patent," the oil first became known to consumers, taking the name of Paraffin, although the substance originally called paraffin by Reichenbach, who discovered it in 1830 in wood tar, is only one of the residual products of rock oil.

The Derbyshire oil wells, however, were soon exhausted, and Mr. Young transferred his operations to Scotland, and set going the manufacture of oil from bituminous coal, as well as from the schists and shales which had, hitherto, possessed no marketable value. The manufacture of Scotch petroleum still continues, although heavily handicapped, by the cost of production, against the natural product of the American wells.

The Americans soon followed in the business. Petroleum from Oil Creek was successfully tested and employed for lighting at Waltham, Mass., in 1851; but the supply of crude oil was, at that time, but trifling. Still, the matter was not allowed to rest. Samples of the mineral oil were placed in the hands of an eminent chemist, Professor Silliman, of Yale College, and his memorable report became the foundation of an enterprise which has now developed into gigantic proportions. A Newhaven company took up the speculation, an experimental well was sunk in the quiet country, where now stands a busy oil-town of some ten thousand inhabitants. At thirty-three feet below the surface oil was struck, and soon sanguine prospectors were boring and testing in all directions. Only thirty years have elapsed since then, but what fortunes have been made and lost! what towns and cities have sprung up in the wonderful, but not very enviable, oil-country! For one cannot hail the progress of petroleum with any enthusiastic joy. All the processes connected with it are dismal, evil-smelling, and more or less dangerous. We read of terrible explosions among oil wells, of unhappy creatures caught and wrapped in a sheet of fire, and frizzling up without possibility of human aid. Sometimes it is an oil tank that explodes—one of those huge reservoirs that may hold twenty, fifty, a hundred thousand gallons. Such an one is now and then fired accidentally, or, perhaps, struck by lightning; then there is a scene such as imagination may

conceive in an Inferno. The wonder is that accidents are not more common, with such elements of danger rendered familiar by constant use. Not that the oil country can claim any monopoly of such dangers, they are brought to our own doors; but if we in England are not careful enough about the storage and distribution of such incendiary stores, we are infinitely more careful than the go-a-head Americans, who feel that they have got to make dollars out of oil, and that it is a minor question whether they are boiled or frizzled in the process.

There is nothing permanent in the oil country. The life of a well, even, is a short and dreary one; the space of five years often sees it pumped out. And thus, while cities rise like magic in a few score nights, other settlements are abandoned, and harvests wave over the sites of market places and exchanges. There is Oil City itself, the titular metropolis of the petroleum country, but no longer in the centre of production. Oil City lives rather upon its ancient reputation. It was settled in 1862, and incorporated in 1871; and is now rather in the way of buying and selling, and speculating, than in actually producing oil. It has its brokers, its dealers and refiners, who meet in a handsome Exchange, and discuss oil in all its bearings; it has a large opera house, schools, banks, daily and weekly papers, and twenty hotels well frequented by oil buyers. But Oil City was comparatively ancient when Bradford came into existence.

The oil-bearing rock runs generally in narrow parallel belts, and, belonging to the more ancient geological series, does not follow the existing configuration of the surface; and for speculators and prospectors who can once get upon the oil line and follow it into untried regions, success brings untold wealth. In this way the trail was followed, skipping hill and forest, to distant Bradford, a hamlet of scattered farm-houses, which forthwith sprang into being as a city, now fully equipped with banks, churches, schools, opera house, two daily and three weekly papers. Here are a hundred and twenty-five oil-producing firms; eleven who make oil-well notions of all kinds; tank factories; boiler shops; saw-mills; nitro-glycerine works; torpedo works; sucker-rod manufactories; producers of every kind of equipment for boring and maintaining oil wells; while pipe lines, stretching to the seaboard, carry away the oil in one continued

stream. Here, too, is a gas supply, which lights the whole city, drawn from a well that pours out the ready-made gas all gratis and for nothing.

The art of well-sinking has naturally attained to high perfection in the oil regions. The ground once tested by an experimental, or wild-cat well, and found to be sufficiently rich in oil, is presently occupied at regular distances by huge derricks, seventy feet high. Each derrick has its attendant steam-engine stationed at a respectful distance, lest an outburst of inflammable gas should occur and become ignited by the engine fires. A sharp steel augur is employed—a set of augurs rather, which are kept constantly sharpened and do duty in succession.

Our primitive notions of a well as a wide-mouthed orifice in which buckets ascend and descend, are not applicable to an oil well, which is only six inches or so in diameter, and drilled with mathematical accuracy. An ingenious system of hollow rods, strung upon a strong cable, transmit the engine power to the boring tool. An iron-casing pipe is fitted accurately into the well to a point below the surface-water of the surrounding district; and, when the oil-bearing stratum is reached and oil begins to ooze in, an operation ensues of a highly sensational character. It is not enough for the oil to ooze, it must flow in a full stream, and, to fairly start the well, it must be torpedoed.

This process accounts for the nitro-glycerine works and torpedo works to be found in our model oil city. For the torpedo is a charge of many gallons of nitro-glycerine contained in tin cylinders and carefully lowered to the bottom of the well. Here we are reminded of that wonderful piece of ordnance imagined by Jules Verne in the "Voyage to the Moon," and probably could an adequate projectile be contrived, it might be expected to knock a hole in the zenith and take its place among the shooting stars. In plain fact, however, the pressure of the atmosphere is sufficient to tamp the charge, which, in exploding, diffuses its force in the surrounding oil bed, violently compressing all its liquid stores. Little is felt of the explosion at the surface—a few minutes follow of silence and suspense, and then with an awful roar, shot forth by imprisoned forces, comes a geyser spout of oil and steam and fragments springing up a hundred feet into the air. When the disturbance is over, a two-inch pipe is inserted,

reaching to the bottom, and an india-rubber plug around the pipe chokes the bore of the well at a sufficient distance from the bottom. In this way the expansive force of the liberated gases drives the oil to the surface, acting in the same way as in our mineral-water syphons, so that in the first period of its existence the oil spouts forth in the form of a perennial spring. In time, however, the imprisoned gases lose their force, and the sucker-rod manufacturer is at hand to supply the necessary machinery for pumping. As years go on the supply begins to fall off; all the wells in the neighbourhood suffer in a similar way; and then the only resource for the adventurer is to start a public company to exploit the failing supply, and retire with all the spoils that can be secured.

But as long as the oil flows merrily, there is no difficulty or trouble in disposing of it. And here come in the pipe lines—enormous networks of iron tubing stretching over the country for hundreds of miles, with a termination at the nearest sea-port. Independent branches run from the different oil wells, and on reaching a main line junction the oil is measured and tested before it is passed in, and a certificate of the quantity received is given by an officer of the pipe company. This certificate passes from hand to hand, and can be negotiated and turned into cash without difficulty. On the strength of these certificates the oil they represent can be drawn from any of the tanks of the pipe company, subject to small charges for transit and storage.

A considerable proportion of crude oil is treated in the oil districts in huge refineries, which sometimes have their own pipe lines and enormous storage tanks. The process of distillation is carried on in huge cylinders through which is driven superheated steam. The first more volatile products are of a highly inflammable and dangerous nature, such as benzoline, gazoline, and naphtha; when these are secured, distillation begins for illuminating oil, which is dangerous or safe according to its flashing point, the temperature, that is, at which it gives out inflammable gases. The higher the temperature at which this gas is evolved, the safer of course is the oil.

The refined petroleum—the ordinary lamp-oil of America—is generally known as kerosine in America. In England we have clung to the somewhat inappropriate name of paraffin; the French, more logically, use the descriptive *petrole*; and the Germans, in their own vernacular, speak



of earth or rock oil. Then there are fancy varieties, such as solar oil, with a higher flashing point and greater density, and many others that half-conceal their connection with the "Old Rock" under fashionable titles. But only three varieties are known to the wholesale trade—namely, water white, standard, and prime; and one or other of these qualities will be found expressed on all those hundreds of thousands of blue and white American casks which reach our shores.

The admirable organisation of the American oil industry, with the labour-saving contrivances in which American invention distinguishes itself, gives the command of the market to the transatlantic product. But a formidable rivalry of supply has sprung up on the shores of the Caspian. About Baku and its ancient fire temple, the rich oil-bearing region has everywhere been pierced and bored. The supply is enormous, but the costs of transport and storage are still so high that the Caspian oil wells have hardly made a great financial success. It is curious to read of a petroleum congress at Baku, attended by Tartars in their lambskin caps, sleek Armenians, and Persians in flowered robes. A very practical congress, however, that discussed railway rates and port charges, and proposed a pipe line, after the American plan, to run the crude oil from Baku to Batoum—the latter being now the great port for petroleum.

From Batoum sailed the *Petria* for Liverpool, a tank ship newly constructed for conveying the oil in bulk. She discharged her cargo at Birkenhead; the ship was empty, in fact, when a number of engineers and fitters descended into the fore oil tank to inspect and overhaul it. Unhappily, familiarity with danger had bred contempt—naked lights were used, and presently a terrible explosion occurred; a sheet of flame shot up towards the sky, reaching as high as the mastsheads, and scorching sails and rigging. Heart-rending cries were heard from the tank, whilst some of the workmen in flames rushed up the ladders to the deck. Yet, although the flames burnt fiercely for four or five minutes, the ship was not set on fire or seriously damaged. But half a dozen valuable lives were lost—a sacrifice which it almost seems as if the genius or demon of petroleum exacts as an installation of every new enterprise.

Such are the dangers of the tank system; but, on the other hand, where

there are proper appliances for running the oil from tanks in the ship to tanks on the shore, as is the case in some of the Thames wharves—where only incandescent electric lights are used—the plan seems safer than the discharge of a cargo of barrels. A load of half-a-dozen barrels of petroleum jolting through the streets of London in an oil merchant's cart suggests possibilities of disaster that make one shudder. Some may remember the *Abergele* catastrophe of twenty years ago, when an express train ran into a truck-load of petroleum in casks, and a number of unhappy passengers were scorched to cinders.

It would be easy to multiply dreadful stories of the victims of petroleum; hardly a week elapses without some fatal accident caused by the explosion or oversetting of a lamp, and yet mineral oil holds its own as giving the one cheap convenient universal light for which the world has been waiting long enough. In 1883, for instance, according to the Customs reports, the importation of petroleum was seventy million gallons, at a declared value of two million pounds sterling, and the consumption is increasing year by year. Perhaps in this country, coal gas, were it sold at competitive prices, would prove as economical, where available. But under present conditions of practical monopoly, petroleum has the advantage. And in the newly-built streets of houses, intended for middle-class people and artisans, where gas is brought to the door, petroleum is in most cases preferred. For one thing the installation of gas is absurdly expensive, the fittings are costly, and involve a serious loss at every fitting. An excellent petroleum lamp may be bought for a few shillings—the reading lamps with circular burners, for instance, the Berlin burners of the trade, with shades and everything complete, for two shillings. And if the lamp is kept clean and the right end upwards, it is as safe as the best. But the suspension lamps, which in Germany are so cheap and good, and which keep out of the way of damage, have not here been popularised.

A witness to the popularity of petroleum is afforded by the itinerant vendor of oil. An oil walk is becoming as profitable in its way as a milk walk, and the cry of the vendor "Hoil, 'ny oil," brings to the door whole rows of householders, or lodgers—the wives, the daughters, the sisters, the mothers-in-law, all the female entourage, in fact, of the artisan busy in some far-off work-



shop—with bottles, cans, milk jugs, and other receptacles, to take in the half-weekly supply. Sometimes the vendor—we must not call him oilman—"Hoilmen, indeed," cried an indignant shopkeeper, a member of the regular trade, "don't call them hoilmen, they're 'awkers;" but anyhow, whether oilman or hawker, he is sometimes the possessor of a pony and a smart little cart, and even deals in lamps, and wicks, and glasses, and the oddments that comprise an oilman's sundries.

And when we get beyond the limits of towns and gas-pipes, everybody, gentle and simple, finds the best source of light in petroleum. In the hall it is probably endowed with a fine name, and costs twice as much as in the cottage. It has been treated to more sulphuric acid and more caustic soda, but it comes out of the same oil well, and the one probably gives as good a light as the other.

If we go in search of the great depôts of the commodity, the search will take us into very dreary regions. There is a cut or navigation that leads from Limehouse Basin to the river Lea, with a black and cindery towpath on one side, and a slimy black wall on the other, with foundations rising from the mud sludge below. Even now with the tide rushing, and almost at its full force, the water is neither clear nor savoury; and what must it be at low tide when the stenches from the mud mingle with the strong odours from the manufactories on either hand? In this neighbourhood we shall come across the petroleum wharf, with its storehouses ranged with hundreds of barrels, or perhaps a great tank that will hold over so many thousand gallons. Here rises an enormous pyramid of empty barrels, others are floating in the pools left by a recent high tide. Light carts drive up to the landward side piled high with more empty barrels, vans and luries are waiting to carry off their load of full ones to the stores of merchants and dealers. Other depôts are on the big river itself lower down, among the creeks and marshes of Essex, wharves where battered, rusty-looking steamers, that have been buffeted by Atlantic waves, haul alongside and discharge their perilous cargoes. Assuredly we are using up the hoarded treasures of Nature at a famous rate.

And though the sources of supply are great, they are not inexhaustible. Certainly, when we hear of an oil fountain bursting out in Baku, and almost drowning

the neighbourhood, we may think that supply is altogether distancing demand. But unless, which is not impossible, there is a manufacturing process actively going on in the bowels of the earth, the exhaustion of present supplies is within a measurable distance. At Baku, ten years ago, oil was plentiful at two hundred feet below the surface; now, a depth of five hundred feet is required to reach the supply. The short life of an American well has already been noticed. On the other hand, yet undiscovered oil regions are awaiting the explorer in every part of the globe. The shores of the Persian Gulf and of the Red Sea, Beloochistan and Afghanistan, have all been suggested as likely sources of supply. The wildest of men can be tamed by showing them how to make dollars; and men of every clime will unite in that delightful occupation. Already oil has been struck in New Zealand, and the beautiful country of the Maories may henceforth be transformed—it will hardly be improved—by oil wells and refineries. But we seem to have opened the last bin—or, some might suggest, the seventh vial—we cannot expect to find much below petroleum, unless, indeed, we succeed in tapping the supplies of central heat.

## CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

### SUTHERLAND AND CAITHNESS.

THERE is a peculiar interest about the early records of Caithness, inasmuch as its inhabitants seem to have sprung from a different source to the rest of the land of the Gael. It may be doubted whether the country was ever thoroughly Gaelic. The earliest settlers in this Northern land are dimly reported as Cornavii; and if we may identify these with a people of the same generic name, largely scattered through the middle regions of Britain, they were probably a non-Celtic race, a people much given to handicraft, and skilled in the working of metals. Into this barren corner of the land they were probably driven by the more prolific and pugnacious Gael. The land is not unkindly after all, and when its now barren moors were clothed with forest—as appears to have once been the case—the aspect and climate of the country were less austere.

As a refuge for a beleaguered people, Caithness is admirably adapted, being cut off from the rest of Scotland by a strong

mountain ridge, rising from almost impenetrable morasses.

Until the beginning of the present century almost the only practicable pass into Caithness, from the south, was that over the mountain of Ord, a height which rises abruptly from the sea, with a narrow path not without its dangers even for the practised mountaineer, and which a handful of men could have held against an army.

As might be expected from its secluded position, Caithness abounds in the relics of a primeval people. Stone implements are found in plenty, and the burial mounds of a race that has passed away; circular forts and dwellings, rude entrenchments and ancient cairns, appear on every commanding spot. Possibly the descendants of the people who raised these archaic memorials are still existing among the cottars and fishermen of the coast; perhaps they disappeared altogether before improvers of their own particular period. Anyhow, a critical examination of skulls and bones has resulted in the discovery that this primeval people were not widely different in frame and cranial capacity from our noble selves. It is curious to note that in all Caithness there is hardly a Celtic name to stream, or glen, or mount. Most of the names are Norse, and, no doubt, bear witness to the Scandinavian conquest.

While the region was well defended on the side of the land, the sea was open to the rovers from the Baltic, and, at the beginning of the tenth century, Sigurd, the Norwegian Jarl of Orkney, invaded and conquered Caithness, and extended the influence of the Scandinavian over the adjoining regions. Then Sutherland received its name. It was the Souther land for these Northern Vikings, and hence we have such names as Helmsdale and Armadale replacing the familiar straths and glens; while the Gaelic reaction is shown in such a redundant description as Strath Halladale. Capes and promontories received their names in the rough Norse tongue: there is a Holborn Head, looking over the wild firth; and Dunnet Head missed narrowly being called Dungeness.

For nearly three centuries Caithness and Sutherland remained, as it were, outlying parts of the Norwegian dominions; and then, in the year 1196, William the Lion, who, during his long reign had done much to extend the supremacy of the Scottish crown, crossed the river Oykel, the frontier of this Norwegian land, and received the submission of its chiefs.

The most numerous and powerful race from that time both in Sutherland and Caithness were the Guns—a sept, or family, which traced its descent from the Norwegian Kings of Man.

Olave, King of Man, according to these Norse pedigrees, had three sons by his third wife; the eldest, Guin (the name being Celtic and meaning white, or fair) in allusion to the flaxen locks of the strangers; and this Guin became the progenitor of the Guns. A second son of Olave's was named Lleod, or grey, and was the ancestor of the Macleods. The third son, Leaundris, was forefather to the Gillanders, or Saundersons, who, for some occult reason have, as "Sandie," become typical of the Scot. In spite of their Norwegian blood, however, these families soon became Gaelic themselves, absorbing their Gaelic neighbours by conquest or adoption, in language, and manners, and dress.

The principal seat of the Guns was the Castle of Halbury, at Easter Clythe in Caithness, otherwise known as Crowner Gun's Castle. This Crowner Gun was a redoubtable chieftain, who flourished in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Although far from being a law-abiding character, Crowner Gun was proud of the office he bore, which resembled that of sheriff in its then prerogatives; proud, too, of the brooch he wore as his badge of office. As for inquests de mortuis, the Crowner was rather in the way of providing subjects for them than of holding them, especially where the Keiths were in question, a tribe with whom the Guns were in deadly feud.

This quarrel was in the blood; there was no getting rid of it. The priests tried to make it up in vain. They brought the Chiefs before the altar; the Chiefs owned their Christian duties, and had almost joined hands in friendship. Then the echo of some taunting verse came between them—some memory of mutual injury—and the heathen gods proved stronger than the crucifix above the altar. Yet both sides recognised the necessity of settling the matter in some way, as mutual ravages were bringing both sides to the brink of starvation. Thus it was agreed, in the spirit of ancient Rome, to decide the question of supremacy by a battle between chosen champions, twelve of a side. Already times had changed so much that it was no longer possible to fight like Clan Chattan and Clankay, in open lists, with the King and his Lords for spectators and

umpires; and hence it was agreed to meet at a secret and desert place known only to the combatants, where the fight might be decided without interruption.

The Guns and the Keiths, then—the chosen champions, that is, of their tribes—met by the side of a lonely burn, called Alt-na-gawn, below the Glut of Strathmore. The twelve Guns, all stalwart men, appeared: the chiefs in gleaming armour, the rest with long swords, and targets, mounted on the wiry little horses of the district. The Keiths at the same moment appeared over the hill—twelve horses. But, ah the treachery of it! As they approached, it was seen that each horse carried a double burden. Still, though overmatched two to one, the Guns disdained to fly. Back to back, shoulder to shoulder, they fought, hewing down their foes with sweeping strokes. But the Keiths were no children, and the force of numbers soon prevailed. The Crowner was beaten down and killed, and presently all his party were slain, excepting his five sons, all badly wounded, who held together, incapable of offensive movement, but prepared to sell their lives dearly. But the Keiths had fought enough, and drew off with banners displayed, and all the spoils of war—the horses, the arms of the vanquished, which they had stripped from the dead, and, above all, the Crowner's famous brooch. And soon they reached Dilred Castle, the abode of a friendly chief, and there found rest and refreshment, and rude medicals for their wounds.

The five brothers made a sad bivouac that night by the side of a lonely burn, where they washed their wounds and talked sullenly of plans of vengeance. The thought that their father's arms were lost, his shirt of mail, his sword and helmet, and that his badge of office, the brooch from which he had acquired his Gaelic sobriquet, all remaining in the hands of their hated foes—filled their minds with shame and anguish. The elder sons were too severely wounded to move from their lairs among the heather, but Henry, a younger one, swore that he would avenge his father's death and win back the trophies of victory, or perish in the attempt. Another brother accompanied him; and, tracking the path followed by their foes, the two brothers presently found themselves at the gate of Dilred Castle. There they found everybody engaged in rough festivity, and in the hall, where the windows were all wide open, the Keiths, gathered around

the central fire, were drinking ale in huge draughts, and loudly boasting and recounting the events of the day. Young Henry, unseen in the darkness, watched the revellers with evil eye, as he fitted an arrow to his unerring bow. Presently the chief of the Keiths detached himself from the group and passed within range, when Henry drew his bow and sent an arrow to his heart, exclaiming in a voice of triumph, an exclamation which has since become a popular saying:

"Iomach gar a Guinach gu Kaigh!"

This sounds very terrible in Gaelic, even if one does not understand it, but it loses much in translation, being rendered simply as, "The compliments of Gun to Keith." Anyhow, the Keiths, imagining that the whole tribe of Guns were upon them, dispersed in flight, pursued by the avenging arrows of the brothers; and the pair, having possessed themselves of the paternal arms and the royal badge, joined their brethren in safety at their rendezvous by the mountain burn.

All the five brothers eventually, it is asserted, founded powerful septs. The sons of James took the name of MacKeamish, which signifies the same thing. From William sprang the Wilsons; Henry founded the line of Hendersons; Robin was the ancestor of the Robsons; while the Macleans owned themselves in Gaelic as the sons of John.

A splendid race were the men of Kil-donan; where the Mackeamish settled about the principal dwelling-house of their chief at Killernan—the tallest and handsomest fellows in Sutherland, by all accounts. A hundred years ago, five hundred strapping fellows could have been mustered in the glen, none below six feet in height, and powerful of their inches. Now only sheep and deer are to be found there.

From the earliest days of the Scottish monarch, it was the policy of the Crown to assign to their personal followers, generally of the Norman race, lordships and fiefs among the still practically independent regions, which were occupied by the Gaelic tribes. And it is characteristic of Gaels, as well as of Celts in general, that they unite more freely and firmly under the rule of a stranger than under one of their own blood. But in Caithness there was the curious meeting of two streams issuing from the same mother country—cousins, many of them, and neither genealogically nor historically far removed. The Jarls of Rouen and Caen,

and the Jarls of Caithness and Orkney were really near akin, but it is doubtful whether they recognised the fact, divided as they were by difference of language and customs. The origin, even of the ruling families of the two countries, is doubtful; whether they were Northmen from Normandy, who replaced the original Scandinavian stock, or these last who assumed Norman names. Anyhow, while the earlier family names disappear or fall into the background, Sinclairs, Sutherlands, and Keiths come to the front, as chief feudatories of the Crown. The Sinclairs soon became practically Lords of Caithness, and in 1455 received titular supremacy as Earls of Caithness and Barons Berriedale. They were a turbulent race, and early in the following century, the Earl of the period was in disgrace and under forfeiture, although he still remained in possession. Then came news that King James the Fourth was assembling all his power for an invasion of England, and the Earl determined to raise the men of Caithness and join the invading force. The Sinclairs crossed the black mountain of Ord, as was long recounted in song and story, on a Monday, and clad in green tartan, marching with all the pride and enthusiasm of Highland warriors, they reached the King's camp on the eve of Flodden. The King marked the welcome reinforcement, and when he learnt that it was the disgraced Earl who had thus joined him in his hour of need, he sent for Caithness and embraced him, and ordered that a Charter of full remission of all pains and penalties should instantly be made out. There were lawyers enough in camp to draw up the deed, for many of these had donned harness and buff coat, and had followed the King to the field; but there was not a scrap of parchment—and the charter was hastily engrossed upon a drumhead, the sheepskin cut out, and handed to the Earl. A faithful henchman was despatched that night from the camp to take the charter back to Caithness, and place it in safety. And this messenger was the only man who recrossed the mountain of Ord of all the brave fellows who had marched over it so proudly. The rest were all killed on Flodden Field next day, and there was mourning presently in all Caithness.

For centuries afterwards, none of the Sinclairs would ever cross the mountains on a Monday, or wear a tartan whose pattern contained a shred of the ill-omened colour—green.

The son of the hero of the Flodden episode was himself slain in 1529, in a less glorious combat. Some dispute as to the guardianship of a Castle in the Isle of Orkney, led the Earl to invade the mainland of the islands with five hundred men. A witch was of the party, a representative of the Fates, who marched in front with a coil of red and blue string, to read the omens of the coming struggle. The result she announced to the breathless Sinclairs, if not in the exact words of the Hermit Monk in Scott's "Lady of the Lake," anyhow to the same effect:

Which spills the foremost foeman's life,  
That party conquers in the strife.

The importance of first blood, as an omen of victory, came down even to the unromantic, if still superstitious, prize-fighter of modern times. The Sinclairs interpreted the oracle in a terribly cruel fashion. Capturing a lad engaged in tending sheep or cattle on the hills, they forthwith killed him, a human sacrifice to their heathenish superstitions. And then it was found how desperately deceitful are the oracles of fate; or, at all events, how destiny must have its way in spite of all human precautions. For the body of the herd boy was presently recognised as one of the Sinclair tribe who had run away, or sailed away rather, from Caithness, and had taken service in the Isles. So it was clear that a sad mistake had been made, and a gloom was cast over the camp.

As the Sinclairs advanced, the inhabitants gathered to assail them, and when the invaders reached Summerdale, they found themselves confronted by a large body of islanders, strong, stalwart men, but indifferently armed, many with only sharpened stakes as offensive weapons. But the ground was thickly strewn with large stones, of which the islanders at once availed themselves, and pelted their adversaries with all their might. Helmet and shirt of mail were of no defence against the hurtling shower of stones. Down went the foremost of the Sinclairs, and after struggling for a while against the storm of primeval missiles, the rest turned and fled, pursued by the enraged islanders, who gave no quarter, and, cutting off the enemy from their galleys, left not a soul alive to tell the tale of disaster.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, when the rest of Scotland was in the throes of the Cameronian disturbances—it, was the year in which Archbishop Sharpe was murdered, and Claverhouse took the



field against the sectaries—the land of Caithness was agitated by its own troubles, which were not of a religious nature. Some years previously, the Earldom of Sinclair—or at all events the reversion of it—had been sold by its incumbent to Campbell of Glenorchie. The curious transaction had, it seems, been confirmed by royal grant, and Campbell, to make things surer, had married the widow of the recently deceased Earl. But the Sinclairs in general were not disposed to acquiesce in this usurpation, and Campbell set out with seven hundred Argyre Highlanders to claim, or if necessary to conquer by force of arms, his disputed Earldom. For this march, it is said, was composed the appropriate air of “The Campbells are coming” with the pibroch, celebrated among the clans, “The Braes of Glenorchie.”

The Sinclairs were not well served by their intelligence department, or they might easily have made “a new Thermopylæ” of the perilous defile across the mountain of Ord. As it was, the Campbells passed safely over the mountain barrier and descended into the plain. The Sinclairs had gathered near Wick, and a battle was fought near the ancient sea-port, on the banks of the river Altmarlach. The result was doubtful, and a truce was agreed upon. Eventually, Campbell withdrew his claim to Caithness, and was created Earl of Breadalbane in compensation, while the Earldom of Caithness was confirmed to the right heir of the first Earl.

Barely a century passes, and we shall hardly recognise the race of fighting turbulent Sinclairs. Here is Sir John Sinclair, for instance, of Ulbster; the model agriculturist; the improving landlord; the author of essays and pamphlets without end; the most indefatigable man in Europe; “the man of the largest acquaintance;” at all events, the friend of all the leading statesmen of Great Britain.

Sir John Sinclair was born in 1754 at Thurso Castle, then a rambling old building looking over the stormy Pentland Firth. “Fish have been caught with a line from the drawing-room window, and vessels wrecked so close under the turrets, that the voices of the drowning sailors could be heard.” At that time there was nothing like a road in Caithness—people followed the sheep-tracks over the hills; and if some local grandee attempted a journey in a coach and six, twenty or thirty sturdy Highlanders attended it, to help it along in the dangerous places.

When Pennant visited Caithness, he wrote that scarcely any farmer in the county owned a wheel-cart, and burdens were conveyed on the backs of women, thirty or forty of whom might be seen in a line carrying heavy wicker creels.

With restless energy this man of many projects was soon at work to change the face of the country. “Can you carry a road over the hill of Ben Cheilt?” asked the old-fashioned landlords in scorn, when he proposed a road through the mountain barrier of Caithness. Sir John mustered over twelve hundred labourers, and working from dawn to dark, a road was made passable for wheeled carriages in a single day. Owning a sixth part of the whole county, he set to work to improve his own estate, introducing improved methods of agriculture; introducing also the Cheviot sheep which was to replace the hardy Highland cottar. But Sir John was not a ruthless depopulator. “Though extremely anxious,” he writes, “to establish the system of sheep-farming, yet I was very unwilling to part with the small farmers. I therefore proposed to them to take lots of land, amounting in general to about two acres, besides the privilege of pasturing their cattle on the neighbouring hill. No plan could answer better. The arable land they occupy is brought into regular fields; their exertion in the cultivation of waste lands is hardly to be credited; the idle and useless have become active and industrious.”

Opinions may differ as to the benefits of wide changes such as Sir John effected; but the man himself was no doubt actuated by better motives than that of merely increasing his rent-roll. There was a spirit, too, about him that recalls his less cultivated ancestors. In 1794, Sir John raised a regiment, called the Rothesay and Caithness Regiment, mustering full a thousand men, on his own estates: this regiment he commanded himself, serving with it for eight years in various parts of Scotland and Ireland. One of his chief difficulties with his men was to prevent their starving themselves in order to send home money to their families in Caithness. Truly there is something to be regretted in the loss of a race of so noble and simple a type.

One of the chief memorials of Sir John Sinclair’s energies is the “Statistical Account of Scotland,” originally compiled at his instigation from reports furnished from each parish throughout the country—generally by the minister of the parish—

forming a mass of local information, history and tradition, which has been the basis of most of the works since published. Sir John's daughter, Catherine Sinclair, also became well known as an author, producing among many almost forgotten novels and stories, the book for children called "Holiday House," the first practical protest against the excessive primness and goodness of the juvenile literature of that period.

There is a certain difference in character between the lands of Caithness and Sutherland. The latter is wild and sterile exceedingly; the hills are bare rock, where hardly the lichen can find a hold; the pastures are mossy and moorish; the plains boggy and wet; and yet there are pleasant straths and glens here and there, green plantations and sparkling lochs innumerable.

The history of the county is mainly the history of its chief Lords, whose pedigree—if not without dispute, yet, with general consent—begins with a certain Hugh Freskin, son of Freskin of Moray, who received the Thanedom of the district at the hands of the Scottish King. Hugh's son was created Earl of Sutherland A.D. 1228, and the line ran on without interruption till the death of John, the ninth Earl, A.D. 1514. Earl John's sister had married the second son of the Earl of Huntly, and thus the Gordons made good a footing in the county. Before the Gordons came, the Mackays were the principal clan in the county, as the worthy minister of Farr records in his contribution to the "Statistical Abstract": "About four hundred years ago"—the good man prudently does not commit himself to dates—"the Mackays began to make themselves conspicuous in this district as a clan."

Farr and Strathnaver were the principal residences of the Mackays, a branch of which was ennobled as the Lords of Reay, a land noted for its deer with forked tails. The whole country, indeed, was noted for its deer, as Sir Robert Gordon records in 1639: "All these forests and schases are verie profitable for feeding of bestiall and delectable for hunting. They are full of red deer and roes."

Another branch of the Mackays displaced the Macleods at Edderachills, and called themselves Mackays of Scourie. Of these Mackays was Sir Hugh, born 1640, who fought against Dundee at Killiecrankie, but who earned more distinction

under William of Orange, in Ireland. The Gordons are still represented in Sutherland, although not very numerous, for the main stem of the Sutherland-Gordons ended in an heiress who married, in 1785, George Granville Leveson-Gower, Marquis of Stafford—whence the present Dukes of Sutherland, a title created in 1833.

In the beginning of the present century Sutherland was a land almost apart from the rest of the kingdom. There were no roads there till 1811, and the country resembled the most barren part of the west of Ireland. And yet every spot that could possibly be cultivated was inhabited by a strong and prolific race. The crops were poor indeed, just enough starveling oats to keep the people from starvation with bere, from which they distilled, preferably without the consent of the Revenue authorities, their favourite beverage, whisky. Smaller crofters lived mainly on potatoes, and every now and then a failure of the crops necessitated an importation of oatmeal by the landlords, to save the people from starving. The time had gone by when the lives of devoted men could be turned into money or honours; and thus a general clearance was resolved upon. Between 1810 and 1820 the great bulk of the small tenants were removed from their holdings and settled on the coast.

It is a mistake to suppose that emigration was largely resorted to. Some of the better class of small farmers, no doubt, found a more genial home on the other side of the Atlantic; but the great bulk of the people had not the means to emigrate, and certainly nobody came forward to supply them. They were compulsorily settled upon the sea-coast and upon the barren shores of the lochs. They were free to help themselves to the stones, and were incited to build their own huts therewith. Where the people were adaptative enough to take to fishing for a livelihood, the sea, more generous than the land, provided them with a fair living. Others, wearied with the struggle with such hard conditions, found a refuge almost as hard and unkind in the large cities. The wynds and narrow alleys of Glasgow could answer for a considerable proportion of the once free mountaineers of Sutherland.

With all this we have not touched upon what, to many, is the most interesting part of the story of these hyperborean regions. Some who care not for Gordons and Sinclairs, may exclaim, "Who was

John o' Groat, and what about his house?' Alas! there is little to be said but to repeat the old story. There really was a family of Groats or Grotes it seems, and not derived from any old ferryman to the Orkneys adjacent, who might have charged a groat for the passage. But three brothers, Malcolm, Gavin, and John, are said to have arrived one day at the farthest point in Scotland, charged with a letter of recommendation from King James the Fourth. In one way or another they acquired the lands of Warse and Duncansby, and prospered in the world till, and here the legend comes in, eight thriving families owned old John as patriarch, and sat round the board in fellowship. Then the question arose—when John goes, who shall have the seat at the head of the table next the door? The discussion promised to end in a general free fight, when patriarch John interposed and promised that, if peace were maintained, he would give each one satisfaction. Then, before the next meeting, he built the house, the foundations of which still remain, with its eight doors and its octagonal table in the centre, where each guest might feel satisfied that he occupied the place of honour.

#### REFUGES FOR SPRING.

THERE can hardly be much sense of fitness in the bosom of Mother Earth, or she would not have so rudely disturbed the winter quarters of the best European society—Asiatic, African, and American society as well, for that matter; for Tartar Princes, with a thin film of Russian polish; Egyptian Pashas, who have learnt the secrets of European finance; American notables; Bonanza Kings; and the rest; yes, and also Australian Knights of the Fleece and Lords of improved building lots. All these flock to that favoured region of the Riviera, where summer follows in the lap of autumn, and winter is only a name borrowed from the almanack. And if the riches and dignities of the earth rub together in this balmy land, there is no lack of Nature's other favoured children. Great preachers; prima donnas—the word is honest English by now; masters of all the arts and sciences; all the successful beauty and virtue, or wit and genius duly crowned and acknowledged; rendezvous about the pleasant Mediterranean shore.

Earthquakes in the remote parts of the

earth are to be expected. People who are subject to such contingencies learn to take them as they come. They are considered in rent and taxes, no doubt, and buildings are made to correspond with their uncertain foundations. But in a country not prepared for such visitations; where houses are tall and hotels monstrous; where there are towers, and pinnacles, and huge domes to fall about people's ears; in such case the earthquake is something portentous and terrible.

The east wind and the fog are bad enough, no doubt—perhaps, in the long run, more destructive to life than the earthquake; but these are enemies that it is possible to circumvent and evade. But when the solid earth begins to roll like the sea, the heart that nothing else can shake may acknowledge a pang of mortal fear.

And thus it is no matter of surprise that there has been a pretty good panic and stampede from the cities of the South—Cannes, and Nice, and Monaco, and Mentone—while only the gamblers have retained complete sang-froid, upheld by their faith in their systems, and regarding death itself as nothing but a fatal zero. As for heroism of any other kind we may look for that among peasants buried in the ruins of their churches, among soldiers and policemen—for the rest, there is as much of it to be found as in a crowd escaping from a burning theatre.

But there is a serious question to others beside those to whom a winter in the Italian borders has been merely a luxury, or means of passing the time; to those who, without being exactly invalids and under the orders of a physician, still find the severities of an English spring too trying for throat and lungs. We must remember our latitudes, which we share with Hudson's Bay and Siberia. We have only the Gulf Stream to thank that we are not frozen up altogether in the winter, and have not to wait for the breaking up of the ice in our rivers to regain communication with our neighbours beyond sea. As it is, the Arctic regions only open upon us at intervals. Given a breeze from the west, and we are greeted with balmy airs, which make the fields a delight, the street a pleasant promenade, and life the most desirable of gifts. Again a whirl of the weathercock, and behold Siberia is turned on! a wintry wind curdles the blood, congests the vital organs, takes the colour out of everything, and makes the world a grey and dreary desert.

And now whither shall we fly? The winter flight is a hardship in itself, when the Channel has to be crossed in a howling equinoctial, succeeded by a weary transit in Continental trains, crowded, hot, and pestilential. There is the dreariness, too, of bad weather, away from all acquaintances and loved pursuits; of cold nights deprived of every home comfort; of shivering over a morsel of charcoal in a china stove. Now, if there were only a few weather refuges in our own land—in this land of warm and weather-tight rooms, of easy chairs, carpets, and blazing fires, and if people could spend their winters, and disburse their gold in their own country—well, in that case, even earthquakes might be shown to have good intentions in them. Let us make a rapid survey, and see what we have in the way of home supply for the demands of suffering bronchial tubes and overtaxed lungs.

As far as the winter months are concerned, the difficulty is only one of choice, for along our coasts, wherever the genial influence of the Gulf Stream is felt, there is little severity in the weather, and it is only at the change of the year that sea-fogs are really troublesome. The whole of the south coast, accessible as it is to the metropolis, enjoys in the main a genial winter climate. From November to February there are perhaps as many bright and genial days at Ramsgate as at Cannes. Brighton is as brisk and pleasant as can be desired all through the winter; but, alas! the sirocco is nothing to the terrible east winds of March that drive before them clouds of dust, and make the King's Road a desert and the Marine Parade a place of desolation.

Hastings is more sheltered, and some of its old-fashioned terraces under the hill seem especially warm and snug; but St. Leonards, although a pleasant winter residence, is hardly proof against the treacherous breath of spring. Folkestone, pleasant enough at all times of the year, is as pleasant as ever during the winter months. For invalids, Sandgate, close by, affords a really sheltered nook, with a south-westerly aspect, and is more free from fogs than any of the adjacent districts. But the usual quietude and repose of the place are especially accentuated in winter and spring. Now Eastbourne does not altogether remain dormant during the winter; but it has no special shelter against cold winds. But when you get round Beachy Head there is Seaford,

snug and sheltered in position from the land side, and with a magnificent sea breaking upon its shore, but in winter suitable rather to a colony of anchorites than to people who like a little human companionship. Worthing, again, is mild, and rarely visited by frosts, but there is nothing like a winter season there in a social sense; and the whole coast may be said to have sunk into somnolence for the dull season, till the Isle of Wight is reached, with a milder climate along the southern piece of the shore, and a winter population of visitors who are mostly invalids.

Then comes Bournemouth, which is no doubt the best and liveliest of all the winter stations along the coast, its liveliness being, however, of the sober and dignified order. And here the neighbourhood, if not exactly charming or romantic, has a character of its own. There is an element of the unexpected about the place, in its mixture of cliff and heath and trim paths, and shrubberies and pine barrens, suggestive of being in a foreign land. But then Bournemouth is not a new discovery; perhaps it is generally filled as full as it will hold during its winter season.

The Dorset coast and the whole inland country strikes one as wild and windy beyond the general; the hills look dismal and inhospitable. Even Weymouth is hardly tempting in winter, and, although mild in climate, it is open to every wind that blows. But Devonshire offers a choice of pleasant winter quarters. The inland towns are cheerful and sunny, and there are numerous places along the coast which far from hibernating in sullen, bear-like fashion, are looking out each year for a contingent of residents. Such are Seaton and Sidmouth, with climates mild and yet not relaxing, where orange trees and lemon bushes flourish the year through in the open air, and nipping winds are almost unknown. As far as scenery goes, Devonshire may hold its own with any foreign shore. A fine sunny aspect have both Teignmouth and Torquay, the latter one of the brightest and pleasantest towns on the coast in the dull season of the year. As a set-off for the mildness of its climate, Devonshire gets plenty of rain in the winter months; but nowhere can the bitter winds of spring be more successfully evaded. Then, too, spring comes with especial grace and beauty; the traditional spring-tide of the poets, with all its wealth



of ferns and wild flowers, and the tender green of woods and copses, where all sorts of "small fowles" make melody. Altogether those are happy who can spend spring-time in Devonshire.

There are warm and pleasant nooks in Cornwall, where the east wind biteth not, and the hazy sea laps pleasantly among fairy caves; but these retreats are not very accessible in winter time. But there is a village called Flushing on Penrhyn Creek, just opposite Falmouth, where there is a ferry across the water, that has a most warm and genial aspect, and is so well sheltered from every cold wind that it affords an excellent retreat for any bronchially afflicted pilgrim. But then it is a retreat, not a popular resort; the place itself a village of no great pretensions.

The north coast of Cornwall and Devon, and the shores of the Bristol Channel, are better adapted for the summer and autumn, unless for those, who, like the late Charles Kingsley, enjoy (or pretend to enjoy, as is more likely) a boisterous north-easter. But from this verdict, Clevedon must be excepted, which enjoys an especially genial aspect, and with its margin of green meadows, stretching down to the very sea brink, and the pleasant scenery around, forms as pleasant a spring rendezvous as can be conceived.

All through Gloucestershire, under the shelter of the Cotswold Hills, runs a sheltered track of country, where spring opens genially and pleasantly, a district, the head-quarters of which is Cheltenham, by no means a desolate place, even when the hunting season is over, and violets stud the groves.

But for a warm, genial county, Herefordshire seems to bear the palm, although there is nothing but the charm of its rich pastoral scenery to bring people into the county; no spas, no baths, no watering places. And one might coast all round Wales without finding much temptation to linger in the bleak March winds. The snow-capped mountains give one a shiver, although the valleys are often pleasant and genial enough. Carmarthen Bay, with Tenby, seems warmly placed, and there are stretches of country along the coast here and there, which seem expressly designed for health resorts in the nipping seasons. Such is the shore between Barmouth and Harlech, sheltered eastwards by great barriers of hills, and enjoying a mild and equable climate, especially in the early months of the year.

Further north winter seems to linger, and there is a keen grip in the air that reminds us that we are in Northern latitudes. Still, along the west coast, and especially where the hills of the Lake district afford their shelter, there are warm and sheltered nooks; and although the days shorten and the fury of the gales increases, as we get further north, yet the season among the Western Isles, although wild and wet, is far from cold. But then, those Scotch lairds and Highland chiefs have had a keen eye to a comfortable nook, and most of the warm corners are already taken possession of.

## THE OLD "R.A."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

### PART I.

SIXTY-FIVE years ago, in the great manufacturing town of Birmingham, which then was only in the dawn of its prosperity, a certain worthy button manufacturer—not a Croesus by any means, but of wealth sufficient for modest wants—of the name of Fellowes, became the happy father of a son. The button-maker was stout, John Bullish, business-like, practical; his wife, Marianne, who was the daughter of a Baptist minister, of somewhat bookish habits, had a vein of gentle romance, and loved her Mrs. Hemans next to Cowper's Hymns, the "Pilgrim's Progress," and the Bible. The father suggested the unpretending names of John, Richard, Henry, which latter had a tendency in his mouth to lose one letter; the mother wished for something more poetic for the infant Hercules, who, she was sure, would grow up to be something remarkable. She suggested Gerald, Cyril, Cecil, Leonard. The father made a wry face at each, but he was heartily fond and proud of his sentimental, "superior" wife, and wished to please her. At last she discovered among her ancestors—for she boasted of ancestors, while he did not go beyond a grandfather who had kept a small cheesemonger's shop—a certain Sebastian. This was too alluring a name. She harped on the "Sebastian" till her husband gave in, and the boy baby was christened—for Richard Fellowes did not "hold with the Baptists"—by this high-sounding appellation; and Sebastian's mother, as mothers have a way of doing, built her airy castles of his future and dreamt of the honour she would shed on the family

he had come to adorn. For a wonder her dreams seemed likely to be fulfilled. He was—everyone said so, not only his parents and his nurse—a beautiful baby, strong, vigorous, rosy-cheeked, dimpled; he read at four; he got well through the preliminary tortures of pothooks and hangers; he even triumphed rapidly over the multiplication table. His mother adored him, and nourished his growing mind with such literature as she understood and loved. But the oddest thing was that the child began to develop an unexpected talent. Neither father, mother, uncle, aunt, nor grandparent had shown any marked leaning in the same direction—for feeble pencil landscapes with trees done in little rows of three, black silhouettes, or Berlin-work figures can hardly be called works of art. Sebastian was going to be an artist! At five he scratched figures with a knitting needle on the colour-washed walls of the night nursery, above his bed; he scrawled on his slate with more intention than is generally shown in such efforts; he covered his books with men and women in violent action; he made a portrait, at eight, of the black cat and his Grandfather Mildmay with his big, round spectacles, which were very like; he spoilt everything he touched that would admit being drawn upon.

That was his father's version; his mother's was very different. If he failed to get a high place at school, she excused him by saying that his head was full of other things; you could not expect a genius to be good at rule of three, and *hic hæc hoc*. It was not that he was idle or obstinate, as his master said; it was that he had not scope to show his talents. Her husband good-naturedly scolded her for her folly, while all the time his own heart was weak about this only son. He was now fifteen, and old enough to "come into the business," as the manufacturer announced in a matrimonial tête-à-tête to his wife.

A stranger, casually glancing at this couple—the husband black-browed, thick-set, with a somewhat bull-dog set of features, stout and solid figure, and loud, rather blustering manner of speech; the wife mild-eyed, pretty in an old-fashioned, intensely feminine fashion, as much like a brown-haired spaniel as he was to a bull-dog, with her drooping curls and soft insipid smile—would perhaps have thought him a domestic tyrant and her a willing slave. The facts were just opposite. The Birmingham button-maker was entirely led, if in a silken string, by his softly sen-

timental wife: she could do with him what she pleased. In his eyes she was high-born, elegant, accomplished, interesting; he was diffident about his own tastes, and dependent on her mind outside the sphere of his business, which he kept apart from her. He had let her manage the boy as he had let her name him according to her fancy, and he thought himself favoured by fortune for having won so "uncommon" a wife, as he called her. He had a misgiving that his Marianne's opinion on the subject of Sebastian's career might not agree with his, and so, though he pronounced it with a great show of determination as if it were an unalterable decree, he mentally waited with some anxiety to hear what she had to say.

"You really think of our Sebastian taking to the business, Richard?" his wife cried, raising her mild voice above its usual level, and throwing up her long, thin, mittened hands with a gesture of astonishment. "You cannot be serious, dearest! You must know it will never be."

"Why on earth not? It's not a bad business, nor anything disgraceful. You used not to despise me for being a manufacturer, Marianne."

"You dear, oh no! I have nothing to say against the business for you; but Sebastian is different. He is a genius, he must follow his bent."

Mr. Fellowes shrugged his square shoulders in a helpless sort of way; he was silent for a moment, and he then said in a dubious tone, "I doubt genius buttering his bread, Marianne."

"My dear, everyone thinks him a wonder. I showed Mr. Gilbertson, the frame-maker, his book of drawings, and he said they were 'as-ton-ish-ing.' Gilbertson should be a judge if anyone is. He says we ought to send him to study in London: he knows an artist, a very gifted man, who takes pupils and trains them for the Royal Academy. It would be dreadful to tie down such a boy as Sebastian to button-making. I've nothing to say against it," she added coaxingly, as she perceived a slight frown on her lord and master's face, "only it is not what he is born for—one ought not to thwart a boy's genius."

It ended, as most matrimonial discussions ended with this worthy pair, in Mrs. Fellowes's triumph.

The manufacturer gave way. He went up to town and saw the artist who took pupils—and who paid Mr. Gilbertson, the frame-maker, a commission when he got

him any—and was impressed by the untidy, fierce-looking, ragged-haired man, who had "artist" written, as it were, on the shoulders of his dusty old studio-coat.

Mr. Fellowes was an acute and sensible man, though a slave to his die-away, soft-voiced wife, and he rightly judged old Hamlin, the unsuccessful painter, who could never make money, but who could make artists, and who had a spark of the divine fire in him, to be the right man to train the budding genius of Sebastian. His coarse, clever, charcoal drawing; his rough studies of colour, which seldom got finished; all had the mark of one who might have made a name if he had not been too erratic, too extravagant, and a little too fond of whisky to finish well what was finely conceived. He could teach, and had taken to that to earn his living, when he despaired of ever painting as it was in him to imagine what painting should be. He gladly closed with the liberal offer the Birmingham trader made him, and the long, handsome, brown-haired Sebastian, with the awkwardness of a hobbledohoy, and the gentleness of a girl in all his ways, came up to London to board with a Dissenting minister who knew Mrs. Fellowes's father, and to draw at Mr. Hamlin's studio. It was a queer contrast between the studio in Fitzroy Square and the prim household in Charlotte Street. The one, dirty, disorderly, strongly flavoured with slang, tobacco, and spirits, with a Bohemian atmosphere of cleverness and devilry; the other, narrow, precise, conventionally pious, redolent of tea and tracts. The quiet boy had far more in common with the latter, though he meant to seize every opportunity that the studio offered to make that fame for which he longed, and to which he set his obstinate will. He disliked and disapproved of the talk, the smoke, the disorder; but he went calmly on in the midst of it, and fixed his mind firmly on the star of his hope beyond. He was an odd mixture: his stubbornness kept him serenely correct in what would have been a terrible ordeal for a weak or passionate temperament, and he was equally uninfected by the fervour and fire of his master's spirit; yet he was always mild, soft-spoken, docile.

"You will never be a great artist, lad!" Hamlin cried out one day, letting his hand fall heavily on his pupil's shoulder, as he stood behind him looking at the chalk drawing on his board; "you've a fatal facility, but you've no devil in you. Every

genius must have devil and angel mixed in him."

Sebastian glanced up and smiled a little. He did not believe in the words in the least.

"Was there a devil in Raffaele, sir?" he asked softly.

"Raffaele! Do you mean to be a second Raffaele?" cried the old man, laughing in his rough way; "but I'm at times unconvinced of Raffaele's genius. I sometimes think it was only the consummation of talent. Yes, you've a fatal facility, you have great industry; it's very likely you will make money, but you sadly lack devil. Take to domestic art, my lad. Take to the touching—sentiment, sentiment, that's your line!"

"Yes, sir. I mean to do so. I should like to make the world sweeter and better by my brush."

Old Hamlin grinned, and then made an odd face.

"Oh, you poor, good prig!" he muttered into his rough grey beard as he turned abruptly on his heel.

Sebastian went on with his chalk drawing of the Discobolus calmly, smiling a little. He did not in the least accept his master's dictum; he meant to be a great man, and he said to himself: "I will raise the love of art; mine shall be always pure."

He went on with that "fatal facility" of which the rough artist spoke; his drawings were accepted at the Academy, and he became a student there. He made friends with the few steady pupils, avoided the rowdy ones, protested against the necessity of studying the life model—as may be supposed in vain. He could not see, he said, why knowledge of the human figure could not be mastered from the antique; he objected, on principle, to any other means of attaining such knowledge; he carefully concealed from his good parents in Birmingham and from the serious friends there, the awful fact that he was obliged to draw from the living undraped model. His mother would have had all her joy in the career of her genius completely destroyed if she had known the dreadful world of art, the temptation of the studio.

Of course, Sebastian was a laughing-stock. He was partly unconscious of that fact; wholly unmoved by it. The long-limbed, thin, rather angular lad had grown into a singularly handsome young man, with a certain stateliness of demeanour and sweetness of expression; a

deliberate courtesy of manner which he wore perpetually; long brown locks curling at the end like his mother's; and features a little like those of the Stuart Charles the First.

He was, in spite of his rather melancholy expression, a lucky fellow, as all his companions declared. He never had any reverses; but then he was unexceptional—he never deserved any. He spent no time or money in riotous living; he drew or painted all day; occasionally went to the play; but more often his relaxations took the form of "spending a quiet evening" with friends. If the friends had daughters, he had cordial relations with them; but he kept out of flirtations or love-making.

Before he left the Academy he obtained a gold medal; he got a travelling scholarship, and visited Italy.

At twenty-three he had his own studio, and began to fill it with pictures. When he went home to Birmingham at Christmas he took his mother a present of one of these, beautifully framed and smoothly painted, a Biblical subject—Ruth Binding the Sheaves.

Mrs. Fellowes shed happy tears over it. Neither she nor any of her friends who were invited to see "dear Sebastian's sweet painting," discovered that Ruth's arm was out of drawing, and her hand too small by several inches. It was a lovely face; so smooth, and with such big, brown eyes, such richly-curling locks below the veil; the sky was so blue and the corn so yellow. Even the button-maker looked at it with much complacency, though he said he was no judge of such things. In his heart he marvelled at the strange development of the Fellowes stock, and supposed it was the Mildmay blood—Marianne's father, the Baptist minister, had published a book on the Prophets, and was considered a light in his connexion.

It is true that the next Academy skyed the only picture they took of Sebastian's; but he went on serenely, and had no fears. He took to painting domestic subjects—pretty babies beginning to walk, with smiling young mothers looking on—"The First Tooth," "Papa's Coming," and such like; and the year following he made his first hit with them. Three of his baby subjects were well hung; his religious one of "Christian at the Foot of the Cross," being rejected.

He felt that it was, as he said, his mission to sweeten and purify the world with his talent. Forty years ago art was at a low ebb;

critics were not so critical as they are now; the day of universal talent, of hopelessly overstocked markets of genius, had not begun. People, especially women, liked pretty, sentimental, drawing-room pictures, and Sebastian Fellowes suited them. He sold his three easily, and had an order for more. The robust spirits scoffed at his mild art; but he never minded scoffers, and they liked him in a way—even while they more than half despised him—he was so polite, so kind, so impossible to ruffle. And behind all the mildness there was a grand obstinacy, which was, perhaps, the most valuable quality he possessed. Self-belief and obstinacy, these take a man far!

He had no despairs or agonies; a happier man could hardly be. "And so good," his mother said with tears. "Most great geniuses are wild and difficult, but Sebastian is so good! He never forgets his father or me; he spends all the time he can with us; he never says a harsh word; he is as steady as if he had never left his mother's side!"

Certainly there was no sign of "devil" developing itself in Sebastian Fellowes. He painted on serenely, and had his public, his admirers, and his buyers. As for the class of critics who spoke of his pictures as "the roast mutton and milk pudding style of art," a profane description which stuck, he ignored them with generous disregard. He could afford to be abused; the Art journals of the day reproduced his "lovely bits of domestic art" in steel engravings of exquisite softness, and many a fair hand turned the page tenderly. Every year he conscientiously produced what he called a "serious" work, taking his subject from the Bible, from Milton, Spenser, or his mother's favourite, "Pilgrim's Progress." These did not sell so well as the babies, but he enjoyed painting them, and felt that he was fulfilling his destiny, and raising contemporary art. So the years slipped prosperously and calmly on till he was thirty, and then two great events came to Sebastian. One day, as he took an omnibus to the City to see a picture-dealer, he found opposite to him a face that was as an ideal to him. He was painting a picture in which there was to be an angel—a conventional angel, with large white wings and curling hair—and he had not hit as yet upon the countenance which he desired to depict. But this young girl simply, even shabbily, but neatly dressed in black, with



the innocent, wistful eyes of a child, and the milk tints of exquisite fairness, was his typical angel. He looked at her, not rudely, but with thoughtful and rather tender interest, but only met her blue eyes once, when she blushed and withdrew them. The blush made her perfect; completed his inward idea of sweetness, modesty, softness of character; and he told himself that he would see more of her. As usual, Sebastian's lucky star was in the ascendant; he saw her put her hand in her pocket for the little purse, which he could fancy was thin enough; a quick, pink colour—the blush of surprise and dismay, not of gentle confusion this time—flooded the pearly whiteness of her face. She withdrew her hand at last, and looked across at Sebastian—they were alone in the omnibus—with an expression of despair.

"Can I help you? Have you lost anything?" he asked her softly. Girls always instinctively trusted the handsome, stately man, with the kind, friendly brown eyes.

"I've been robbed," she said, with a little quiver in her voice, which was not at all a vulgar one, though the tone had a trace of the cockney. "I had not much, but it is very awkward—I have nothing to pay the man."

"Don't trouble at all about it. I shall be only too glad to help you out of that little difficulty," he said in his gentlest, most persuasive voice, instantly producing and passing a shilling to the conductor with the word "two."

"Thank you so much," she said, blushing again. "I will send you the sixpence if you'll tell me where."

"No; pray, pray, do not take the trouble! Do not think of it."

"I had rather," she said quietly, and a second thought striking him, he gave her his card at once. It occurred to him that he should like her to know where he lived.

When she asked him to stop the omnibus he got out with her, and pretending that he had business in her direction, asked very humbly if he might walk with her. She could not help trusting him; she could not

help liking him. They got into talk as if they had been "properly" introduced. She was only a respectable little working girl, who did fine work for a baby-linen warehouse, and supported an invalid, bed-ridden mother, with infinite difficulty and uncomplaining hard work; and he was a pure-hearted, chivalrous man, who would rather have suffered torture than betray a maiden's trust. They knew each other, somehow, to be simple and good. He walked through the sordid streets with little Mary North to her lodgings, and then asked her respectfully, and in a matter-of-fact way, if he might come in and see her mother. He went in, for she only hesitated a moment; was very kind and polite to the poor, half-alive creature, who had seen better days, as she kept repeating, and before they parted he had so convinced them of his good faith and absolute respectability, that the shy, modest girl had consented to let him paint her for his angel. When she was introduced to his large studio, chiefly adorned with his own pictures in different stages, she clasped her hands in delighted surprise, with an exclamation that made him smile with pleasure:

"Oh, sir, how lovely! I had no idea you were a great painter."

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